



# NEWSLETTER

Of The

## *American Musical Instrument Society*

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**OUR COVER** shows an E. & G.G. Hook Organ (opus 171, 1854) in the First Congregational Society—Unitarian Church, Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts. At the time this venerable instrument sounded its first notes, Jamaica Plain was an area of farms and elegant country estates. Francis Parkman and Jonas Chickering were summer residents here in the nineteenth century, as John Hancock had been in the eighteenth. Elias Hook (of E. & G.G. Hook) lived in Jamaica Plain during the last 15 years of his life, and in our own time such renowned figures as Serge Koussevitzky have lived in Jamaica Plain. (Continued on page 2)

The NEWSLETTER is published three times yearly — June, October and March. All correspondence should be directed to THE NEWSLETTER Editor, William Maynard, 17 Lincoln Avenue, Massapequa Park, New York 11762. Photos and short news items will be welcome.

Requests for membership in AMIS may be submitted via the Editor's office.

**AMERICAN MUSICAL INSTRUMENT SOCIETY  
(AMIS)**

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**(Cover story continued:)**

Little remains of the rural atmosphere today, however. With the coming of the streetcar service in the late 19th century, Jamaica Plain became a well-populated suburb, and later, a part of Boston.

As it happens, Jamaica Plain has special importance for the musical world, for there is no other community (not even Boston itself) where so many large American organs of the pre-Civil War era survive. There are three, in fact—all three—manual instruments, all by the same builder, and all within walking distance on the same street. The Baptist Church contains E. & G.G. Hook's opus 253, built for that church in 1859. A few blocks away, in St. Thomas Aquinas Church, stands the oldest of the three organs, opus 160, built in 1854 for St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Boston.

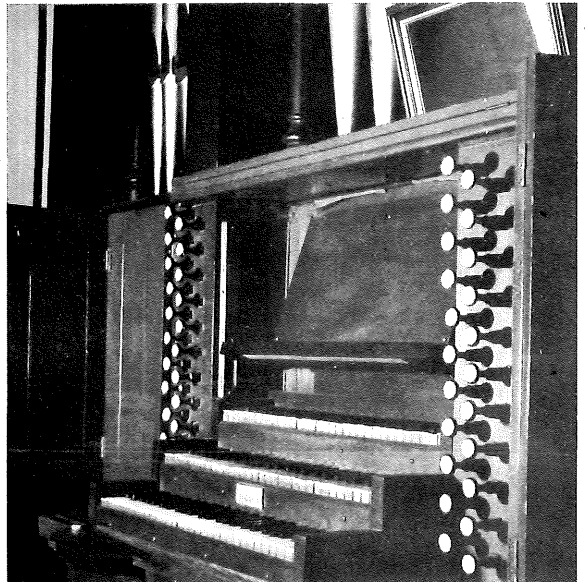
Midway between these two churches stands the First Church of Jamaica Plain. In the gallery of this church is a superb Hook instrument of 3 manuals and 31 speaking stops, built in 1854 and surviving in virtually unaltered condition. The smaller pipes, most of which are still cone tuned, are well preserved thanks to careful tuning procedures employed over the years.

The wind system is entirely authentic, including the original leather (incredible though this may seem in our day of chemically processed leather which scarcely lasts 25 years) on both the bellows and the feeders, and should one wish to raise wind by hand, the bellows handle is quite operable! No longer in use, yet a charming reminder of the century past, are the gas-lights provided near the music rack and inside the organ for the use of the tuners.

This splendid instrument survives in unrestored, though thoroughly playable, condition largely because it has received moderate use and the excellent care from three generations of the Lahaise family—Erasmé Lahaise, who was in the employ of the original builders, his son Henri, and presently by grandsons Robert and Richard Lahaise. To these men we owe special thanks, for they preferred to give the old organs entrusted to them excellent care during a time when many other organbuilders urged the discarding of many outstanding instruments in favor of something "modern." These instruments are, therefore, rare survivors in North America.

*(Our cover story was excerpted from a record jacket written by Thomas Murray. Mr. Murray performs the Mendelssohn organ sonatas, op. 65 in this recording on the Jamaica Plain organ of 1854. The recording is available from Sheffield Records, P.O. Box 5332, Santa Barbara, Ca. 93108.)*

Console of the E & G.G. Hook Organ of 1854. First Church, Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts.



## AMIS FIFTH NATIONAL MEETING

The fifth annual meeting of the AMIS will be held on the campus of the University of South Dakota at Vermillion, April 30 – May 2, 1976 with the USD Center for Study of the History of Musical Instruments as host. Full registration materials, including information about motels, transportation arrangements between Vermillion and the Sioux City, Iowa airport, and the program details, will be sent to all members with the March Newsletter.

The *tentative* format for the South Dakota meeting is as follows:

Friday, APRIL 30—Pre-registration Event

Second annual American Music Festival, 8:00 pm, Theatre I, ESD Center for the Fine Arts. A concept of American music performed on authentic, period instruments. (Note: Sold-out last year; complimentary tickets will be available only to pre-registrants.)

Saturday, MAY 1

Registration at ESD Center for Continuing Education

Panel on Musical Iconography

Papers and Musical Interludes

Banquet and Evening Entertainment

Sunday, MAY 2

Papers and Musical Interludes

Panel on Wider Applications of Instrument Studies

Business Meeting

The three new exhibition halls in the "Shrine to Music" Museum, Galleries I, II, and III, will be open throughout the meetings.

Members planning to attend the meeting are asked to fill out the card which accompanies this Newsletter and return it to the program chairman as soon as possible.

## CLASSIFIED COLUMN

*Members may place non-commercial ads in this space. Twenty words will cost \$5.00 for one issue. Checks payable to AMIS should be sent with copy to the Editor.*

FOR SALE: General Collection—over 100 pieces, many winds. Several listed in Langwill. Collection sold as a unit. Best offer over \$25,000.00. Call or write for list or apt. James Francis, 155 Amherst Dr., Toledo, Ohio 43614. 419/385-4229.

## CALL FOR PAPERS— AMIS SOUTH DAKOTA MEETING

The Program Committee of the Society (Frederick Crane, Robert Eliason, Andre Larson, and Edwin Ripin) requests that anyone (including non-members) interested in presenting a paper at the 1976 meeting submit a typed abstract of the paper, as soon as possible, to:

Dr. Andre P. Larson, Program Chairman  
USD Box 194

The University of South Dakota  
Vermillion, SD 57069

Presentations should be limited to approximately 20 minutes. Demonstration of performance practices on specific instruments is encouraged (please indicate the instrument(s) and the material to be performed). In keeping with the celebration of the American Bicentennial, papers and/or performances dealing with American music and musical instruments (including various ethnic influences) are especially encouraged. If papers require audio-visual equipment, please indicate your needs on the abstract. The *deadline* for receipt of this information is January 15, 1976.

A card is enclosed with this Newsletter which should be filled out and returned to the Program Chairman. *If you want a paper to be considered, please return your abstract with the card.* If you have any other ideas or suggestions, or wish to chair a session, or whatever, please contact the Program Chairman as soon as possible.

## AMIS DUES DUE

AMIS dues are once again due, payable by January 31, 1976. If dues are not paid in full by that date, the Secretary will be forced to remove your name from the mailing list, Volume I of the AMIS Journal will reach all members in November of the current year. The unusual delay in publication was due to several factors associated with the setting up of style features, advertising, etc. that one might expect to be associated with a new publication. Volume 2 of the Journal is already at the printer and is currently scheduled for printing in the first quarter of 1976 and from now on, we anticipate Journal appearance by April of the publication year. As with all enterprises, our printing and mailing costs have gone up considerably so we urge your prompt response to this call for 1976 dues. For your convenience, a dues envelope is enclosed to assist your prompt response.

## "SHRINE TO MUSIC" MUSEUM TO OPEN

The "Shrine to Music" Museum, administered by the Center for Study of the History of Musical Instruments at the University of South Dakota in Vermillion, will formally open three new galleries on November 15.

The galleries, which are completely climate-controlled, will display representative instruments from the Arne B. Larson Collection of Musical Instruments & Library and have been made possible by a grant from the South Dakota Bicentennial Commission matched with funds provided by the private sector. All will include provisions for visitors to hear the instruments, as well as to see them. AMIS members will have an opportunity to view the new galleries during the AMIS national meeting which will be held April 30–May 2, 1976 on the USD campus.

Gallery I is devoted to interpretive exhibits of American music and musical instruments within the context of American social and cultural life during the past two hundred years. Restored turn-of-the-century showcases, along with custom-built oak display cases, contain exhibits which focus on the wide variety of America's musical heritage, ranging from the music and musical instruments of the Indian Peoples of North and South America to American jazz of the early twentieth century (including slide saxophones and echo trumpets), and from Appalachian folk music to the music and musical instruments of the Civil War period. The musical efforts of the early midwestern pioneers have been noted, while another exhibit focuses on American popular music at the turn-of-the-century.

The view shows a portion of Gallery III in the "Shrine to Music" Museum on the campus of the University of South Dakota, one of three new galleries which will be formally opened in November to exhibit representative instruments from the Arne B. Larson Collection. In the foreground is an early piano by John Broadwood of London, No. 1499, dated 1791. In the background one sees part of two of the exhibits of non-Western instruments—from India (on the left) and from the Far East.

Gallery II features representative American keyboard instruments—home and church reed organs, melodians, and a variety of pianos, including a Chickering concert grand (1884), square grands by J. & C. Fischer (1857) and Steinway & Sons (1872), and a unique "giraffe" piano (one of two in the Collection) by Schimmel & Nelson (1889)—along with hammered dulcimers and other related items.

Gallery III includes three major sections: Non-Western music (India, the Far East, and Africa), European folk music (central & eastern Europe, northern Europe, and the Mediterranean countries), and European art music (six exhibits of representative stringed, brass, and woodwind instruments).

The new galleries will provide public display of approximately 5 percent of the Center's holdings. The Arne B. Larson Collection, which consists of more than 2,500 instruments, was established primarily as a research collection. However, many of the instruments which are not exhibited in the new galleries will continue to be available for viewing in the Center's teaching facilities.

### EDITOR'S COLUMN

\*\* Dr. Robert E. Eliason, Curator of Musical Instruments, Henry Ford Museum (Dearborn, Michigan 48121) would like to locate for study, musical or mathematical instruments made by George Catlin (1778-1852) of Hartford, Connecticut and Philadelphia. He is supposed to

(Cont'd. on page 5)



(Cont'd. from page 4)

have made fifes, flutes, oboes, clarinets, tenor and bass clarinets, bassoons, harpsichords, pianos, pipe organs with barrels or keys, violins, guitars, tenor viols, violin cellos, and bass viols. He also claimed to make guagin rods, wantage rods, sliding gunter calipers, board and log measures and other mathematical instruments.

\*\* We set out for our vacation this summer with visions of relaxation and the anticipation that there must still be many "gems" gathering dust in the back of some junk shop. While we did get the former, the latter, as usual, never did materialize. What we did find however were some historically important instruments in collections of local museums and libraries. These were isolated examples which would be known only to local collectors and not large enough to be found in a survey. If you know of any such instruments please send this information to the Editor. We will include this data in forthcoming issues as a regular feature of the Newsletter.

\*\* An unusual exhibit took place last summer at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The Museum presented a "please-touch" program for the blind. Other museums have presented similar exhibits in the past but this was the first time that musical instruments were the objects used. About fifty instruments including a Mexican slit drum, a German post horn, an Appalachian dulcimer and a four-octave spinet were on display for the visitors to touch and play.

\*\* With the Bicentennial well on its way, articles such as *Music: Thomas Jefferson's "Delightful Recreation"* will find a wide range of readers. Appearing in the July 1972 issue of *Antiques* magazine, author Helen Cripe discusses the instruments Jefferson purchased for members of his family.

\*\* The last AMIS mailing served to distribute the catalogue of the Society Lincoln Center Exhibit to all members. The printing of the catalogue was made possible through the generosity of Cora and Laurence Witten, lovers of music and musical instruments and steadfast supporters of AMIS.

## BOOKS: OLD AND NEW

*TWO ESSAYS ON ORGAN DESIGN* by John Fesperman, The Sunbury Press, Raleigh, North Carolina, 1975 XVI +95 pg +25 full plates.

Two hundred years ago the harpsichord and the organ were THE keyboard instruments. The harpsichord all but vanished with the arrival of the piano, while the organ continued to absorb new ideas and technology. This occurred gradually until the turn of the century when it had become something too far removed from the classical ideas to transmit the beauty and excitement of the classical organ music.

In his second essay "Rediscovering Classic Organ Building in America" Fesperman traces the search for such rediscovery during the 30 years preceding 1961 when the first significant organ fully incorporating classical principles was built in America. Classical organs, in the best sense of the term, are now being built by some American builders, and it is good to read this concise account of the "ground-breaking years".

The first essay, "Organ Design and Organ Playing"—described in the Prologue as a "comprehensive introductory organ lesson" tells in a reasonably thorough but purposely uncomplicated manner what commonly is considered a classical organ.

It is not difficult now to see why a "classical harpsichord" would normally be either a very old instrument or a copy of one. The uninterrupted building of organs, however, poses special problems in the appreciation for classical organs. Fesperman's essays are a well written remedy.

The Sunbury Press could hardly have found a better book to launch its efforts to bring us scholarly, interesting, and well made books relating to the subject of organs.

Fritz Noack

Pipe Organ, 2 manual  
mechanical action. Compass:  
Manuals C-g<sup>'''</sup>, pedal C-g'  
Nameboard inscription:  
Andover-Flentrop, Mount Calvary  
Church, Baltimore, Md., 1961  
(From "Two Essays on Organ  
Design").

